

Fluoride Varnish Treatments and Your Child

What is fluoride varnish?

- A dental treatment that **prevents and slows tooth decay** (cavities).
- A coating brushed on the surfaces of the teeth.

How does fluoride help teeth?

- Fluoride mixes with tooth enamel, the hard coating on teeth, to make teeth stronger and more resistant to cavities.
- Fluoride varnish works with saliva to protect tooth enamel from plaque and sugar.
- Fluoride varnish prevents new cavities from forming and can slow down or stop decay from getting worse.

Is fluoride varnish safe?

- It is quick, easy, and safe for children of all ages.
- It does not hurt.
- A very small amount is used and hardens fast. Almost no fluoride is swallowed.
- Fluoride varnish is safe to use, even if your child gets fluoride from other sources, such as from drinking water, tooth paste, prescription fluoride, vitamins, or formula.

How long does fluoride varnish last?

- It lasts several months.
- It works best when applied at every well visit.

Why is my doctor/health clinic using fluoride varnish?

- Your doctor cares about your whole child's health – including their mouth and teeth!

- While children should get regular dental checkups, your doctor can check the mouth for problems and provide fluoride varnish to keep teeth healthy in between visits. Your doctor can also refer you to a dentist if you don't have one.

To protect the fluoride covering after varnish is applied:

- It is okay to eat and drink warm (not hot) or cold liquids and soft foods right away after the treatment.
- Sticky or crunchy foods and hot liquids should be avoided for 24 hours.
- Teeth should not be brushed or flossed until the next day.

What to expect after a fluoride varnish treatment:

- Teeth may look a little yellow or dull for the next 24 – 48 hours.
- Your child's teeth will still need regular brushing, flossing and dental checkups.



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